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Letter dated 20 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, which was to be delivered on 20 September 2017 at the high-level debate on United Nations peacekeeping (see annex).

I would appreciate having the present letter and its annex circulated for information as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jānis **Mažeiks**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, for the high-level debate on United Nations peacekeeping

New York, 20 September 2017

I thank the Ethiopian presidency for organizing this high-level debate. I also thank the United Nations Secretary-General, the chairperson of the African Union and the representative of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations for their remarks.

In the past two years since the peace and security reviews, much has been done to reform our approach to United Nations peacekeeping. Latvia fully supports the reform process to make United Nations peacekeeping up to par with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Yet, our work and commitment to make United Nations peacekeeping operations more adaptable, responsive and relevant to these challenges must continue. It is especially important to bridge the gaps in United Nations capabilities when it comes to rapid deployment of peacekeeping missions. In this regard, I particularly welcome the work on improving cooperation with the relevant regional actors, such as the African Union and international contributors like the European Union.

The ultimate goal of United Nations peacekeeping reform must be peacekeeping missions with realistic mandates that meet the practical necessities of the host nation or area of deployment. Better planning, equipment and training is essential to effective mandate delivery, the protection of civilians and the security of United Nations personnel.

I also recognize the inherent value of the involvement of women in peacekeeping. Latvia fully supports the ongoing work to align United Nations peacekeeping reform with the provisions of the women and peace and security concept.

We believe that the United Nations-European partnership has brought tangible results for the beneficiaries on the ground. The activities under the United Nations-European strategic partnership in peacekeeping and crisis management is a clear example. Cooperation between United Nations and European Union missions, including bridging operations, in the Central African Republic and in Mali is another.

Latvia also supports the creation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. It will strengthen United Nations capacity through enhancing cooperation with a relevant regional actor. We believe this is a valuable mechanism to further multiply the impact of United Nations peacekeeping on the ground.

The safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel must remain our top priority. Often the root of the problem lies in the lack of situational awareness and localized intelligence analysis, especially when missions are exposed to asymmetrical threats. In this regard, we fully support United Nations efforts to better integrate modern technologies and intelligence capabilities into United Nations peacekeeping.

In this context, I welcome intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability development in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This could set a valuable precedent for developing similar capabilities in all appropriate United Nations missions in the future.

Latvia has contributed intelligence specialists to the Mission since early 2016. Moreover, in recognition of the Mission's critical need for intelligence and information analysis capacities, Latvia will increase its contribution to MINUSMA by the end of the year.

United Nations peacekeeping reform must be a continuous process with active involvement of the Security Council and the United Nations membership.

However, to achieve lasting peace, United Nations peacekeeping must be part of the larger approach of United Nations conflict prevention efforts. We must strive to use all United Nations instruments to ensure that all people can live in a more peaceful, prosperous and secure world.